

COLOSSIANS

CHRIST IS SUFFICIENT

THE EPISTLE TO COLOSSIANS

The city of Colosse:

- * Was located about 100 miles east of Ephesus.
- * Was located in the region of the Seven Churches of Asia.
- * Was a populous commerce center, famous for its glossy black wool.
- * Several hundred years before Paul's day, Colosse had been a leading city in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey).

* **CHAPTERS: 4** | **VERSES: 95**



THE BACKGROUND

- * The church at Colosse was established by Epaphras
- * At the time of the Colossians letter, Paul had not visited Colosse
- * The Colossian letter was sent from Rome to Colosse by Tychicus and the converted slave, Onesimus
- * While the Book of Ephesians focuses on the Body (the Church), Colossians focuses on the Head (Christ)
- * The church at Colossae was under attack from false teachers who were denigrating the deity of Jesus;
- * they were teaching that He was not actually God.
- * Though Paul had never been to the church itself, he addressed these issues head-on.
- * It was critical to him that this church know God in His greatness and glory, rather than in the deficient view given them by the false teachers ([Colossians 1:25](#); [2:1-2](#)).

THE BACKGROUND

- ✳ As with all the early churches, the issue of Jewish legalism in Colosse was of great concern to Paul.
- ✳ So radical was the concept of salvation by grace apart from works that those steeped in Old Testament law found it very difficult to grasp.
- ✳ Consequently, there was a continual movement among the legalists to add certain requirements from the law to this new faith.
- ✳ Primary among them was the requirement of circumcision which was still practiced among some of the Jewish converts.
- ✳ Paul countered this error in Colossians 2:11-15 in which he declares that circumcision of the flesh was no longer necessary because Christ had come.
- ✳ His was a circumcision of the heart, not the flesh, making the ceremonial rites of the Old Testament law no longer necessary (Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4, 9:26; Acts 7:51; Romans 2:29).

THE BACKGROUND

An analysis of his refutation suggests that the heresy was diverse in nature. Some of the elements of its teachings were:

1. *Ceremonialism*. It held to strict rules about the kinds of permissible food and drink, religious festivals (2:16-17) and circumcision (2:11; 3:11).
2. *Asceticism*. "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!" (2:21; cf. 2:23).
3. Angel worship. See 2:18.
4. *Depreciation of Christ*. This is implied in Paul's emphasis on the supremacy of Christ (1:15-20; 2:2-3:9).
5. *Secret knowledge*. The Gnostics boasted of this (see 2:18 and Paul's emphasis in 2:2-3 on Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom").
6. Reliance on human wisdom and tradition. See 2:4,8.

To guard against these dangers, Paul writes to:

- * Warn the Colossians against relapse ([Col 1:21-23](#))
- * Warn them against those denying the all-sufficiency of Christ ([Col 2:8-23](#))
- * Direct their attention to the "All-Sufficient and Pre-Eminent Savior" ([Col 1:13-18](#); [2:8-10](#))

OVERVIEW OF COLOSSIANS

INTRODUCTION ([Col 1:1-14](#))

1. Salutation ([Col 1:1-2](#))

2. Thanksgiving and prayer ([Col 1:3-14](#))

3. THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST ([Col 1:15-23](#))

- IN CREATION ([Col 1:15-17](#))
- IN REDEMPTION ([Col 1:18-23](#))

4. THE APOSTLE OF CHRIST ([Col 1:24-2:7](#))

- PAUL'S SERVICE ([Col 1:24-29](#))
- PAUL'S SOLICITUDE ([Col 2:1-7](#))

5. WARNINGS AGAINST THE "COLOSSIAN HERESY" ([Col 2:8-23](#))

- WARNING AGAINST PHILOSOPHY ([Col 2:8-10](#))
- WARNING AGAINST JUDAISTIC CEREMONIALISM ([Col 2:11-17](#))
- WARNING AGAINST ANGEL WORSHIP ([Col 2:18-19](#))
- WARNING AGAINST ASCETICISM ([Col 2:20-23](#))

6. THE CHRISTIAN SOLUTION ([Col 3:1-4:6](#))

- SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE ([Col 3:1-4](#))
- PUT OFF THE OLD MAN ([Col 3:5-9](#))
- PUT ON THE NEW MAN ([Col 3:10-17](#))
- FAMILIAL RESPONSIBILITIES ([Col 3:18-4:1](#))

7. EXHORTATIONS TO PRAYER AND PROPER CONDUCT ([Col 4:2-6](#))

1. Devote yourselves to prayer ([Col 4:2-4](#))
2. Walk in wisdom and let your speech be with grace ([Col 4:5-6](#))

8. PAUL'S COMPANIONS ([Col 4:7-14](#))

- COMMENDATIONS OF HIS MESSENGERS ([Col 4:7-9](#))
- GREETINGS FROM HIS FRIENDS ([Col 4:10-14](#))

CONCLUSION ([Col 4:15-18](#))